CLEAN COPY OF AMENDED CLAIMS

1. A method of providing a jackpot in a gaming machine, said machine having multiple simulated reels, and at least one pay line, including at least the steps of:

(a) determining a player's wager;

(b) playing the game, so that the simulated reels assume a specific configuration showing symbols across said reels, wherein one or more of said symbols can be a scatter symbol, wherein one or more of said scatter symbols can be a variable state scatter symbol, said variable state being either an active state, whereby said variable state scatter symbol acts as a scatter symbol, or an inactive state, whereby said variable state scatter symbol is not considered to be a scatter symbol, wherein the probability of a variable state scatter symbol having an active state is dependent upon the size of the player's wager; and

(c) determining if scatter symbols appear across said reels in a predefined manner, and if so then paying said jackpot.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the probability of winning the jackpot based upon the scatter symbols is linearly dependant upon the size of the player's wager relative to a maximum possible wager.

3. A method according to claim 1, wherein the inactive variable state scatter symbol is operative for non-jackpot game play.

4. A method of claim 1, wherein the probability of a variable state scatter symbol having an active state is dependant upon the size of the player's wager relative to a maximum possible wager.

5. A method according to claim 1, wherein the jackpot is accumulated across a plurality of linked machines.

6. A method according to claim 1, wherein the jackpot is accumulated on a single machine.

7. A method of awarding a jackpot in a simulated reels gaming machine, wherein dependant upon the configuration of reels after game play, one or more reels may include active scatter symbols, and one reel may include a set of symbols which selectively form active or inactive scatter symbols, the jackpot being won by a predetermined combination of active scatter symbols in a game outcome display including one on the said one reel, wherein the probability that a scatter symbol is selected as active on the game outcome display is dependant upon the size of the player's wager relative to a maximum possible wager for the machine.

8. A system for operating a linked jackpot, comprising at least a plurality of gaming machines linked to a central jackpot controller, said central jackpot controller and said machines cooperating to implement the method according to claim 1.

9. A gaming machine having multiple simulated reels, said machine including a processor, player wager selection means and a display, and at least one pay line, the processor playing a game in accordance with software, the game including the steps of:

(a) receiving a player's wager from the wager selection means;

(b) playing the game, so that the simulated reels are displayed, on said display, in a specific configuration showing symbols across said reels, wherein one or more of said symbols can be a scatter symbol, wherein one or more of said scatter symbols can be a variable state scatter symbol, said variable state being either an active state, whereby said variable state scatter symbol acts as a scatter symbol, or an inactive state, whereby said variable state scatter symbol is not considered to be a scatter symbol, wherein the probability of a variable state scatter symbol having an active state is dependent upon the size of the player's wager; and

(c) determining if scatter symbols appear across said reels in a predefined manner, and if so then paying said jackpot.

10. A gaming machine according to claim 9, wherein the probability of winning the jackpot based upon the scatter symbols is linearly dependant upon the size of the player's wager relative to a maximum possible wager.

11. A gaming machine according to claim 9, wherein the inactive variable state scatter symbol is operative for non-jackpot game play.

12. A gaming machine according to claim 9, wherein the probability of a variable state scatter symbol having an active state is dependant upon the size of the player's wager relative to a maximum possible wager.

13. A system for operating a linked jackpot game, comprising at least a plurality of gaming machines according to claim 9, said gaming machines being linked to a central jackpot controller, said central jackpot controller and said machines cooperating to provide a pooled jackpot incremented from wagers on all of said gaming machines.

14. A gaming machine having multiple simulated reels, said machine including a processor, player wager selection means and a display, and at least one pay line, the processor playing a game in accordance with software, wherein dependant upon the configuration of reels after game play, one or more reels may include active scatter symbols, and one reel may include a set of symbols which selectively form active or inactive scatter symbols, the jackpot being won by a predetermined combination of active scatter symbols in a game outcome display including one on the said one reel, wherein the probability that a scatter symbol is selected as active on the game outcome display is dependant upon the size of the player's wager relative to a maximum possible wager for the machine.

15. A computer software product, adapted to implement the method of claim 1.